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SUBJECT: PSI: TURKEY'S FEEDBACK ON RECENT OPERATIONAL  
EXPERT GROUP MEETING

Classified By: Pol-Mil Counselor Timothy Betts, reason 1.4 b/d.

1. (C) Summary: Turkish officials at both TGS and MFA have given us positive reviews of the recent PSI Operational Experts Group (OEG) meeting in Omaha. Turkey plans to host an air/ground/sea exercise in May 2006. TGS claims it now has the lead on PSI, but we have not heard this elsewhere. Therefore, until the Turks work this out, we will need to stay in contact with both MFA and TGS. End Summary.

2. (U) Pol/Mil Counselor and EXBS Advisor met on April 6 with BG Haldun Solmazturk, Department of Disarmament and International Security, Turkish General Staff Headquarters who served as head of the Turkish delegation during the recent PSI OEG meeting in Omaha, Nebraska. Solmazturk said that he was very impressed with the coordination and information exchanged during the experts meetings. The meeting cleared up the last questions the Turks had about the initiative. Ankara is now fully committed to PSI.

3. (U) Solmazturk informed EmbOffs that, while Turkey did offer assets for the upcoming Spanish PSI exercise, the current exercise scenario does not require their participation. Although Turkey now will not be actively participating in either the Portuguese or Spanish led PSI field exercises this spring, they do intend to send observer teams to both and to participate in the table-top command post component of the Spanish exercise.

4. (SBU) Solmazturk stated that Turkey committed in Omaha to hosting a PSI exercise in May 2006. This exercise will be a multi-mission exercise focusing on coordinating activities between land, sea, air, intelligence and command and control. Solmazturk believes that this would be an excellent way to test the passing of information from the various activities, while also displaying the need for close coordination between the forces involved. He also intends to include a media day to raise the awareness of activities to stem the flow of illegal items in Turkey. Solmazturk has instructed his staff to have the ground work completed on this exercise for presentation at the next OEG meeting in Denmark in July. This timetable has the added advantage of completing initial work on the exercise before the August TGS transfer season when he and members of his staff might be reassigned.

5. (C) Solmazturk informed EmbOffs his office will now serve as the focal point for Turkish activities. (Comment: If true, this is a change from the past when MFA was the lead contact and could increase the level of active participation by Turkey in PSI activities.)

6. (C) During an equally positive but less detailed discussion of the Omaha OEG meeting with Pol/Mil Counselor, MFA officials did not/not say TGS would now have the lead. They reiterated concern about Turkey's lack of membership in the Core Group and their hope that either Turkey will be included in the Core Group or the Core Group will be abolished soon. Solmazturk said nothing about the Core Group.

7. (C) Comment: TGS is clearly enthused about PSI, more so than MFA which has painful memories of the interagency struggle to win GOT participation in the initiative. We will need to maintain communications with both until they reach a consensus on which agency has the lead. End Comment.

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